The Sketch

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O! TO BE THIS AMERICAN SOLDIER!

PRIVATE JOHN FARNSWORTH *had the luck to be entertained by* GINGER ROGERS, *assisted by* LYNNE BAGGETT, LYNN BARI, BARBARA HALE, GLORIA DEHAVEN, JINX FALKENBURG, DOLORES MORAN, *and* CHILI WILLIAMS, *at a special one-man party, which is further illustrated on other pages. Here the hostesses are writing their names on his shirt, so that in after-years he could have something to assure him that the party really did take place, and wasn't just a beautiful dream!*

PHOTOGRAPH BY RALPH CRANE, B.S.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Selling Britain. For a notoriously soft and decadent people, hide-bound with traditions and class-distinctions (ask any isolationist in U.S.A.)—a people undermined with pacifism and all the demoralising influences of democracy (ask Ribbentrop)—we don't seem to have been doing so badly during the last five years. What is even more extraordinary is that we admit it! We have been telling the world about it. I won't quote facts and figures, for you can read them for yourself in a White Paper which should be placed with the family Bible in every British home. It is high time that we piped up about these things, for it is a serious national failing that we do not "sell ourselves" sufficiently abroad. We are told every day—and we cannot be told too often—that we have got to export, or die. Well, let us export a little of Us Ourselves. The time has gone by for us to be so superior that if foolish foreigners do not value us at our true worth, we cannot be bothered to tell them.

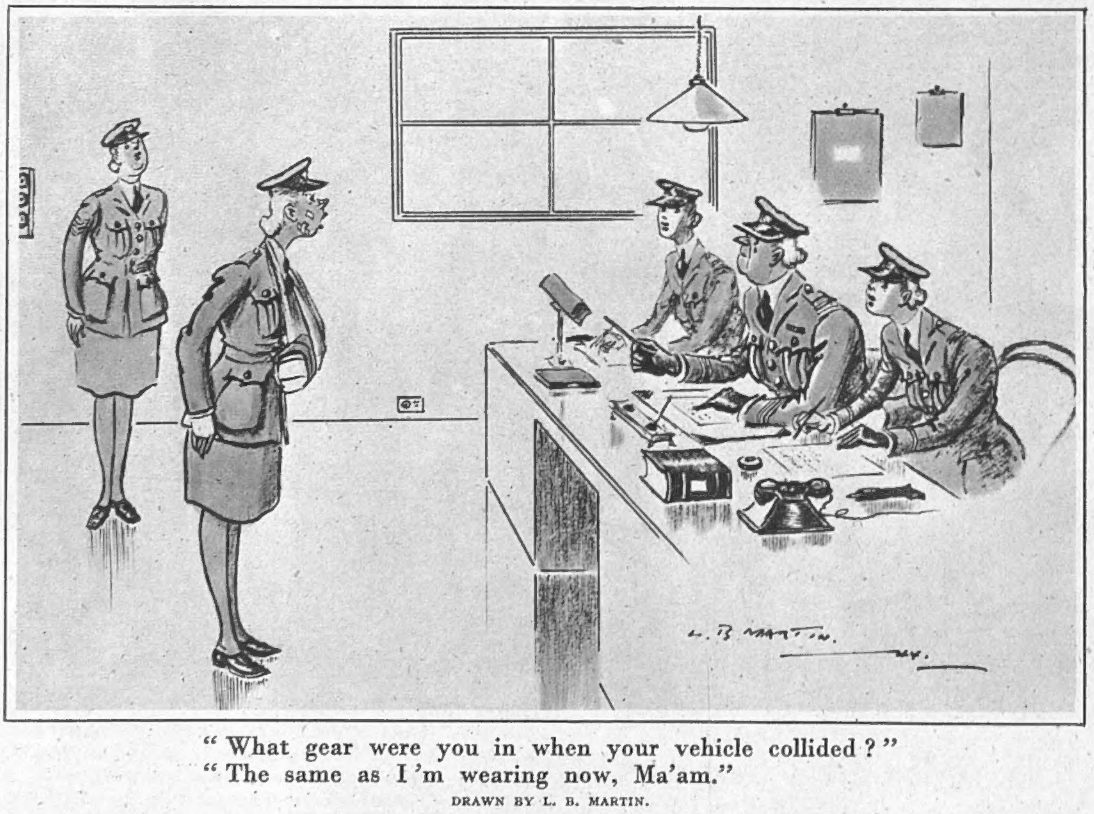
"What's the American for 'scram'?"

DRAWN BY JAYCOT.

"A Decent Lot." Arrogant? Am I indulging in Kipling's "frantic boast and foolish word"? I don't think so. Strange as it may sound, I do not consider that the British race is a special breed of heaven-sent supermen, with a monopoly of all the virtues, and with a mission to rule the earth in righteousness and truth. We need not claim for ourselves any more than the Prime Minister claimed the other day. "We are a decent lot, all of us, the whole nation, wherever you go." He was able to say that even in the House of Commons—and rightly, for, despite all the abuse which is heaped upon them, British politicians are a "decent lot" too, and most of us know it, though we continue to revile them and blame them for everything that goes wrong. That's all—just a fundamental, unspectacular decency, with a strong dash of common sense. Those two things take both an individual and a nation a long way in the humdrummery of this workaday world, and steady, competent humdrummery is the best discipline for the big occasions, too.

The Irrepressible. And so, relying on these plain, homespun qualities, and without flattering us that we are all fine, or superfine fellows, Mr. Churchill cries confidently: "Let us have no fear of the future." It is an appropriate thought for Christmas. Mr. Churchill himself, unless I have misread his character and his biography, has never had any fear of the future, though at times it has been a highly uncertain one. Its vicissitudes have brought him to great power, and still greater responsibilities, at an age when most men seek rest and quietness. Having been exhorted to "Telegraph less," I refrained respectfully from adding to his myriad Happy Returns; but we all sent him a mental, and even a sentimental, telegram. I wonder whether he read all the character-sketches of himself? If so, he must have had a busy and a rather bewildering birthday. If he read the poem in *The Times*, he will have noted, perhaps with mixed feelings, that he has been "refreshed by ocean and enlarged by air." With all deference to poetic licence, it sounds rather like a bicycle-tyre to me, and I don't call it altogether complimentary.

It Will Be Served. "Youth, youth, youth!" cries Mr. Churchill on his seventieth birthday. It is there that he sees the hope of the future—and, indeed, where else can it reside on this (as we hope) last war Christmas? I am bound to agree, though I must add that, being no longer in the kindergarten myself, I have not quite as much confidence in youth as when I was sweet and twenty. "They hate us youth!" cried Falstaff, being himself somewhat long in the tooth at the time; and I should not like to be suspected of any such prejudice. I still think, however, that this war would have been the worse for us if it had not been for some of the old 'uns. And I become perturbed when I see that a Council of Youth in a large industrial area has passed a resolution against cadet training after the war. Is this a forerunner of another post-war reaction, with all those same old elements which found us so unprepared for this struggle?

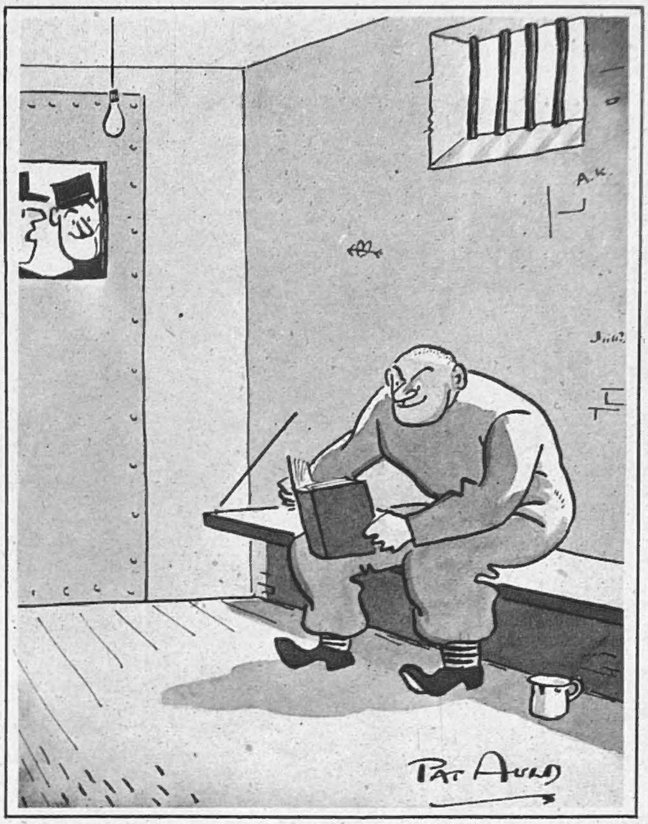


"What gear were you in when your vehicle collided?"
"The same as I'm wearing now, Ma'am."

DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

SALVAGE ALL YOUR OLD LETTERS—FOR VICTORY

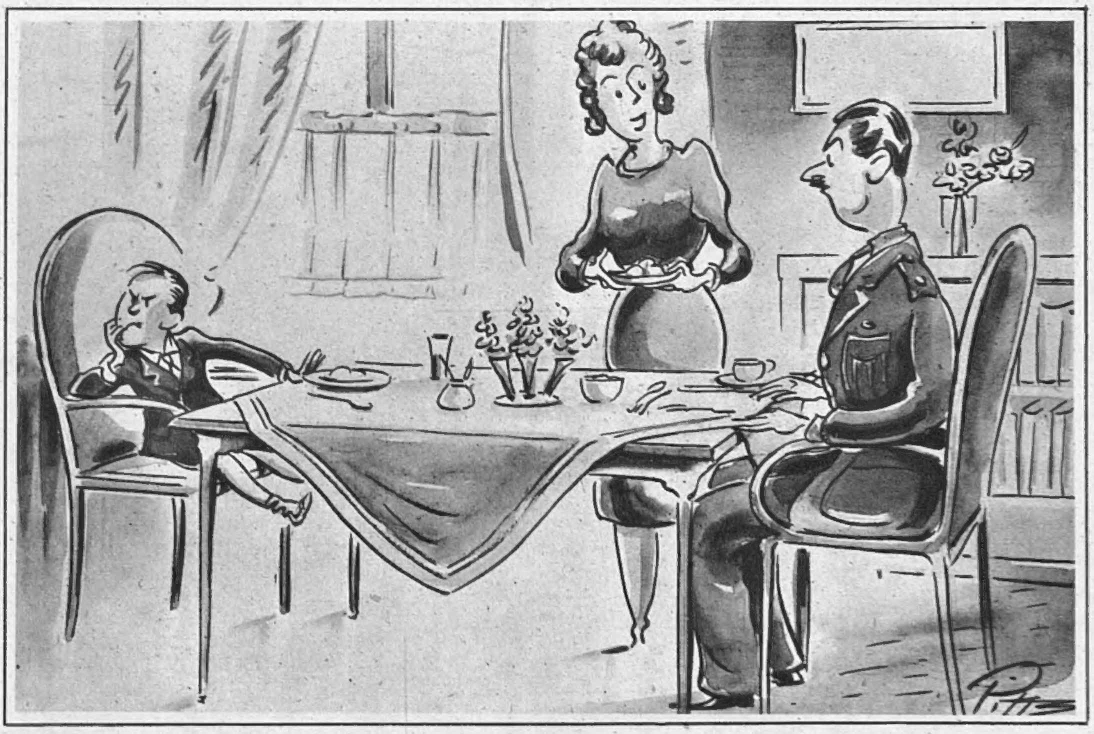
Forward to Methuselah. The fact is, as Mr. Shaw has observed somewhere, that man simply has not time to learn wisdom on this earth. By the time he has begun to learn it, he is dead, or else what Mr. Shaw himself has called "better dead." Mr. Shaw therefore went Back to Methuselah, and now I see that science has taken up the matter with its usual thoroughness. A group of researchers at Oxford, with a corresponding group in America, are trying to find the pathological reasons why some mortals live to a green old age and some are cut off in their prime. If, with the assistance of certain obliging white mice, they can unlock this secret, we are assured that there is no reason why any of us should not live to be 100, and possibly even 200. Well, there is another merry Christmas thought for you! You may or may not consider it cheering. I remember an evangelist who used to advertise on the hoardings: "Thousands now living will never die." It always struck me as a depressing thought, but I dare say that was because I had seen the evangelist and some of his *entourage*.



"I don't like it—he's reading far too much escapist literature!"

DRAWN BY PAT AULD.

Tough Guys. The marvel is not that so many people are cut off in their prime, but that they ever reach their prime at all. I become more and more astonished at the toughness of the human animal. One of the things which endear the films to me is the indestructibility of film he-men. They can take the most frightful bashings, they can be knocked endways by motor-cars, they can be trapped in blazing buildings and aircraft, they can be shot full of lead, but they bob up smiling and apparently undamaged in the next sequence. One merely smiles and murmurs "Hollywood"; but these Hollywood huskies are nothing to some of the really tough guys of this war, and almost daily I read stories of their incredible powers of endurance and recovery. Here is one, for instance, aged only twenty-four—a Sergeant in the Gloucestershire Regiment—who has escaped eleven times from prison camps in Germany, Hungary and Rumania. He was beaten, sent to punishment camps, condemned to long stretches of solitary confinement; and his exploits were not helped by such trifling handicaps as a poisoned leg and a sprained ankle. But nothing could repress him. Rumania very properly surrendered in time to release him, and you will be happy to know he is now hale and hearty in the bosom of his family.



"He read, somewhere in the paper, about his generation having to pay for the war."

DRAWN BY PITTS.

O.D.T.A.A. Then there are those who are so tough that Fate seems to make a sport of testing their toughness by sending them every bit of trouble which malice—and it seems to be deliberate malice—can invent. The stories of these luckless persons, who seem, again and again, to attract every bullet, bomb and torpedo which happens to be "going begging"—these stories are now so commonplace that they arouse only perfunctory interest. The Aunt Sallies of accident seem to be such a definite class of human beings that it is difficult not to believe in Luck. A friend of mine was in a car-smash some years ago; she survived, but her only son was killed. Later she was at the hairdresser's, when the attendant dropped a vast metallic infernal machine—to which, I gather, women habitually expose their skulls—on her head and concussed her badly. She was ill for weeks, and on recovery she went to Scotland for convalescence. A friend who was driving her crashed head-on into a lorry. She was again knocked senseless and cut about with glass. She is very cheerful about it all, but says she is going to live in a V-2 district, as she thinks it might be safer. One wonders what the next little packet in store for her may be!

Injury to Insult. Certainly, this war has produced both its miracle men and its miracle women; and the latter, I gather, are about to add another remarkable feat to their score. Of many a wife it used to be said by ill-natured persons: "She wears the trousers." As half the women of England are now arrayed in slacks, corduroys or dungarees, the gibe has lost most of its point. But now I see a most significant and perturbing suggestion. Before me is an article, addressed to feminine readers, on how to make skirts out of old trousers. Whose trousers? It is not stated; but it is perfectly clear that the implication is *male* trousers. Mark the calm assumption. Any unscrupulous woman who yearns for a natty skirt can invade her husband's wardrobe and mutilate garments worth their weight in coupons. It was bad enough when we stood in danger of our old and valued trousers being "cut down" for little Peter; but that they should now be threatened with major and fatal operations in the interests of feminine vanity is intolerable. Curtains, rugs, chair-covers, horse-blankets—all these I will yield to skirts; but my trousers I will never yield! Interested parties please note.

[*Continued overleaf.*

Gloriana. Here is another type of Miracle Woman who is, I confess, a new one on me; but I dare say I am behind the times. She is known as a Railway Queen. It is announced that she has been chosen, and is to be crowned at

"... and if you aren't a good boy the Government will send you to Eton and Balliol."

DRAWN BY J. W. TAYLOR.

Manchester—a new historical setting, if I mistake not, for coronations. Her qualifications are stated to be "loveliness and intelligence." Just that—Beauty and Brains, which are said by some deplorable cynics seldom to go hand in hand. I am glad that the railways of Old England have disproved that dirty crack, and I do my homage to the fourteen-year-old Sovereign. But I am puzzled about her constitutional functions, which are not explained. I am still more puzzled by the strange and strenuous achievements of Publicity—or should I call it Public Relations? I suppose that is the more genteel term.

They Do Forget.

As we are discussing miracle men and women, let us spare a kind word for miracle quadrupeds. In the Abaw Valley—which, for all *you* know, intelligent reader, is in Polynesia, but which is actually in Burma—there is a gallant company of one hundred elephants working for the Allied cause. They render such valuable service that they are said to be "worth their weight in gold" (exclusive of purchase tax?). I don't know what a full-grown elephant weighs, but I should guess it must be about a ton, so that the price is fairly substantial, even for luxury goods. I am shocked to learn that these devoted creatures are set to work at the tender age of six; it seems a case for Child Labour legislation, especially as they go on toiling to the age of forty or fifty, or even more. They are said to be highly temperamental and sometimes to take a poor view of humans; one of them has abolished five mahouts with a flick of the trunk. What is most disillusioning is to learn that they *do* forget. Still, they are valuable and honoured allies, and there is a piquant irony in the fact that in this highly modern war these Primævals can do what no machine can do.

"Come on, Captain Plumstead, you dumb cluck, Sir—PASS!"

DRAWN BY STARKE.

Out of Sight Out of Mind. It is very unobservant of me, but it was only the other day that I noticed that the statue of George III. in Cockspur Street was missing from its pedestal. I am told that it was removed to a place of safety as a valuable work of art; but I wonder whether it has not been hidden from view in deference to our American allies? It would be awkward if Allied airmen were to empty ! chests of tea over it.

"No, Winifred, I shan't be a *bit* interested to know what it's been like in the Straits of Dover!"

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

More Than Enough.

"The time draws near the birth of Christ." A sixth War Christmas! Too many, far too many — and they are more than six, for there has not been a really peaceful, confident Christmas since 1933. That old, abounding, carefree Christmas of Fezziwig, of Cratchit and even of Scrooge may still be some distance off, but, please God, it is on the horizon. For then, as for now, I offer you warm greetings (subject, of course, to Fuel Control).

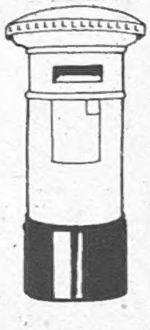
The one-hundred-and-fourth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

TWO MINDS WITH BUT A SINGLE THOUGHT.

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—It was arranged that the people in this place should give a Christmas party to the soldiers from the camp, and Lady B. was put in charge of their entertainment. She immediately formed an Entertainment Committee consisting of Faith and the Conductor and Mrs. Whinebite and me. I had never been on a Committee before and it made me feel proud. We had our first meeting at Lady B.'s flat.

"There 'll be tea, of course," said Lady B. "The W.V.S. are seeing to that."

"God bless the W.V.S.," said Faith.

"But the point is," said Lady B., "what can we do to entertain them afterwards?"

There was a long silence, and then Mrs. Whinebite said, "They might dance."

"If we can find a band," said the Conductor.

"And some girls," said Faith.

I said: "I think it would be nice if we had an enormous Christmas-tree in the middle of the room simply covered with candles and spangly things and the light lowered and Carol Singers with lanterns, and then every soldier and every girl getting a Present. Not expensive presents, of course; just cigarettes and sweets and stockings and razor blades and things of that kind."

"Faith, as the Equestrienne, looked lovely."

The Committee eyed me with cold dislike, and Mrs. Whinebite said: "You seem to forget, Henrietta, that there 's a War On."

Now I made up my mind some time ago that the next time somebody said to me, "You seem to forget that there 's a War On," I would punch them on the nose. However, this seemed hardly the time or the place for such a gesture, so I just said, "I 'm afraid I did forget for a moment," and there was another long silence.

Then Faith said, "I think they 'd be disappointed if they didn't dance."

"All right," said Lady B., and she wrote down "Dance" in a businesslike way on an enormous sheet of foolscap paper.

"Music," said the Conductor. "You can't get a band this time of year. We 'll have two pianos. I 'll play one."

"And I 'll play the other," said Mrs. Whinebite.

"And we 'll get the Simpkins' grandson to bring his drums if he 's back from school," said Faith.

"Now we 're getting on," said Lady B., scribbling furiously. "But we 'll have to give them some sort of entertainment as well. If you once let a party like this pause for breath it falls through a hole and never comes back."

We all listened respectfully, for Lady B. has given parties for all sorts of people all over the world and knows what she 's talking about.

"Not cabaret," said Mrs. Whinebite. "The soldiers are sick of hearing Henrietta sing 'Just a Song at Twilight.'"

Lady B. squeezed my hand, in case my feelings were hurt, but they weren't, because I knew the soldiers were sick of hearing me sing "Just a Song at Twilight."

There was another silence, while Lady B. drew pictures and the Conductor ran his hands through his hair. Then I said, "I know. We 'll have a Circus."

Everybody looked at me in a pitying way, but I wasn't going to be downed just because I 'd made one silly suggestion, for I knew this was a good idea. So I stood up and said loudly: "Yes, a Circus. A comic Circus with a comic Horse and a Strong Man, and Faith can be the Equestrienne, and we 'll have a Circus Master in a top-hat and a whip, and a Tight-rope Walker and Performing Seals."

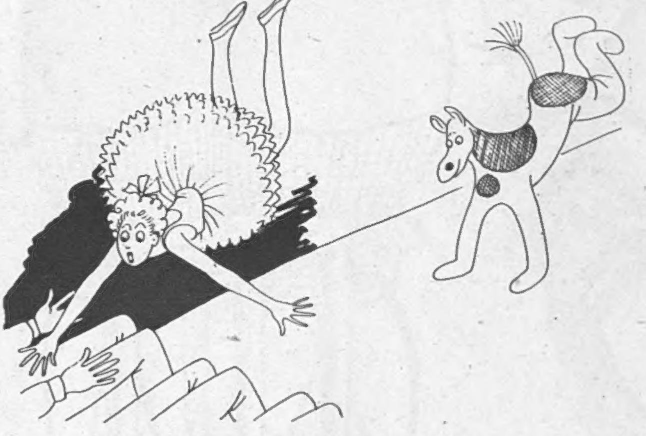
"And I could be the Fat Woman," said Lady B.

The Conductor said, "That 's a good idea," and Faith patted me on the back, and I said to myself, "I must sit on more Committees. I 'm good at them."

So we had a Circus, Robert, and it was a great success. The Admiral and Colonel Simpkins were the Horse. Colonel Simpkins, who was the back legs, kept on falling down, but everybody thought he did it on purpose and laughed like anything. Then, about half-way through the evening, he fell down and didn't get up again, so we opened the Horse and found he was lying there quite exhausted. The front legs said he thought he might be going to have a stroke himself, so they came out and two soldiers took their place and gave a very spirited performance.

Faith, as the Equestrienne, looked lovely. When we had the Procession at the beginning and she came in riding on the Horse, there was quite a sensation. Later, when the Soldiers were the Horse, they pranced about so wildly that she was thrown. But luckily she landed on the lap of a soldier who was sitting in the front row. She wasn't hurt at all, and the soldier was delighted, but the Conductor had fears for her safety, and left the piano in the middle of "The Washington Post" to see if she was all right.

The Conductor and Mrs. Whinebite and the Simpkins' grandson were magnificent as the band. We were surprised at the Conductor, because he has always been given to Bach, and he began playing dance tunes as though he 'd been doing it all his life. When I said to him, "That 's a nice tune, what is it?" he said: "Don't you know? It 's called 'Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby?'" as though I had failed to recognise "The Moonlight Sonata."



"She was thrown."

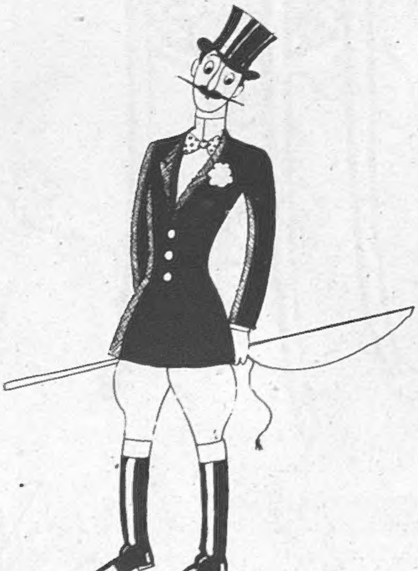
I was the Ring Master, in Charles' hunting top-hat and a black moustache with waxed ends, which fell off twice.

Charles was the Strong Man. He wore one of Lady B.'s jumpers and Colonel Simpkins' long pants with Faith's pink silk bloomers over the top. We stuffed rolled-up stockings up his sleeves and the legs of his pants for muscle, and he raised hollow cardboard weights from the ground with much groaning and straining. He said afterwards that he was completely exhausted by these efforts, and it was a most interesting example of the power of Mind over Matter.

Nobody would be a Performing Seal, which was a pity, because it is so easy. You only have to tie your feet together and drag yourself about on your arms and wear a long, thin, drooping moustache and bark and have fish thrown at you.

We were all terribly tired when the party was over. Faith had drinks for us round at her house, but we all lay back in our chairs with our eyes shut and nobody said a word.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend, HENRIETTA.



"I was the Ring Master."

"Charles was the Strong Man."

DÉGAS DANCER IN BRONZE—AND NET.

This beautiful bronze statuette of a young dancer by DÉGAS *(1834-1917) is on view at the "From Constable to Cézanne" exhibition at the Wildenstein Gallery, in aid of the Airborne Forces Security Fund. Cast in bronze, it wears a "Tu-Tu" of net, and its metal pigtail has been adorned with a satin ribbon bow. Hilaire Germain Edgard Dégas, supreme painter of the ballet, and one of the leaders of the Impressionists, found endless inspiration in the coulisses of the theatre, and painted innumerable studies of dancers on and off the stage. His favourite medium was pastel, but he also worked in oils, aquatint, and eau-forte, executed a number of lithographs, and modelled many subjects of dancers and horses. Some are in terracotta, and others cast in bronze.*

ROYAL OCCASIONS, WEDDINGS, SERVICE GIRLS, A HERO AND A PARADE:

"INCHES" *jumps yards! A little tiny* WREN, *one of the smallest members of a boat's crew at a big naval base, leaps ashore to make fast as the craft comes alongside.*

H.M. THE QUEEN *made purchases at* LADY URSULA HORNE'S *stall when she visited the "Christmas Tree" Fair in aid of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association at Rootes, Piccadilly.*

H.R.H. THE GRAND DUCHESS OF LUXEMBOURG *took the salute at an M.T.C. parade, and presented the Commandant's Cup to an officer of No. 36 Company.* CORPS COMMANDANT MRS. PEAKE *is seen standing on the right.*

THIRD OFFICER MARY DE PUTRON, W.R.N.S., *daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pierre de Putron, married* FLYING OFFICER RUSSELL VICK, *son of Mr. G. Russell Vick, K.C. (who is conducting the L.C.C. Remand Homes inquiry), at Grosvenor Chapel.*

MRS. LORNA TWINING *is in charge of the Y.M.C.A. Mobile Guards' Canteen in Italy with the Fifth Army. She formerly worked in a W.V.S. canteen at Victoria Station, went to Algiers with the Y.M.C.A. in 1943 and to Italy in January 1944. She serves near the front line.*

LADY BIRD, MME. MASSIGLI, *wife of H.E. the French Ambassador, and* MRS. WINSTON CHURCHILL *had a lot to talk about at the reception given by Sir Robert and Lady Bird to the Ambassador and members of the Anglo-French Inter-Parliamentary Committee.*

THE CAMERA TAKES A LOOK ROUND FOR PICTURES AT HOME AND ABROAD.

ISS MARGOT LUMB, *the holder of the Women's Open Squash Racquets Championship, married* MAJOR W. H. L. GORDON, M.B.E., M.C., *Royal Corps of Signals, at the Chapel Royal, Savoy.*

MAJOR D. V. CURRIE, *29th Canadian Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment (Royal Alberta Regiment), was awarded the V.C. for his gallant conduct and contempt of danger during three days' fierce fighting in Normandy.*

he marriage of FLT. LIEUT. HUGH W. FARMAR, *son of Colonel armar, C.M.G., D.S.O., and Mrs. Farmar, to* MISS CONSTANTIA UMBOLD, *daughter of the late Sir Horace Rumbold, Bt., took place at the Grosvenor Chapel.*

The marriage of COLONEL ELLIOT ROOSEVELT, C.B.E., *second son of "F.D.R.", to* MISS FAYE EMERSON, *twenty-seven-year-old Warner Film actress, took place recently. The bride has just finished work on a new picture, "Nobody Lives for Ever."*

W.O. (I) F. SHERIDAN *adjusts the ribbon of the 1939-43 Star on* W.O. (I) I. METCALF, *one of twenty members of the Delhi Company (W.A.C. [I]) who were decorated at a New Delhi parade.*

THESE SMART DRUMMERS *are members of the W.A.A.F. drum and trumpet band. This Central Voluntary band fulfils Service and public engagements. The girls have all trained in their spare time, and they are all very keen and proficient.*

The W.A.A.F. now has its own band of drums and trumpets, fifty-three strong. SERGEANT SIDNEY ELLISON, L.R.A.M., L.R.C.M., *instructor for the trumpeters, is rehearsing his section. He was formerly a trumpeter in the L.S.O. None of the girls had blown a trumpet or beaten a drum before enlisting in the W.A.A.F.*

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

So the mammoth Technicolor "HENRY V." has arrived on the screen at last. Now we can appreciate the meaning of those tasty posters, silver fleur-de-lys on an azure ground, that have popped up for weeks on the London hoardings, between advertisements of a certain brand of gin and adjurations to Cut our Gas and Electricity.

"Henry V." (Carlton) was "Produced and Directed by Laurence Olivier in close association with the Editor, Reginald Beck." Mr. Olivier was also, presumably, in close association with the B.B.C.'s Dallas Bower, his associate producer; with my admirable colleague from the *Manchester Guardian*, Alan Dent, the Text Editor; with Robert Krasker the Director of Photography, Paul Sheriff, the Art Director, and Roger Furse, the Costume Designer; with William Walton, who wrote the music, Muir Matheson, who conducted it, and the London Symphony Orchestra, who played it; and with his long cast of sterling actors, many of them Mr. Olivier's old colleagues from the Old Vic, including Robert Newton as Pistol, Leslie Banks as Chorus, Renée Asherson as Princess Katharine, Harcourt Williams as King Charles VI., Max Adrian as the Dauphin, Ralph Truman as Mountjoy, the French Herald, and Leo Genn as the Constable of France.

What is even more important for the successful translation of the play, Mr. Olivier seems also to be in close association with Shakespeare. This is quite a help to anyone trying to put Shakespeare on the screen; and also quite a rarity. People have been endeavouring to film Shakespeare's plays for nearly thirty years, and although one or two of the attempts have had beauties of their own, this is the first time they seem to have caught the sense of Shakespeare's special beauty.

Laurence Olivier starts off with the advantage of being himself a practising Shakespearean. He is in love with his lines, which is as it should be for anyone trying to interpret the loveliest lines in the English language. But he is also in love with the Shakespearean concept; with the dramatist's whole approach to the stuff of life; with his humour and splendour, his good fellowship and loneliness; his brassy romanticism and his heart-tearing simplicity. All this is something a man must discover for himself and adore, if he is going to bring the real quality of the plays into his production or his performance.

"Summer Storm" (London Pavilion) is the Hollywoodised version of Tchehov's "Shooting Party." Olga (LINDA DARNELL), *peasant seductress, is adored by impoverished judge Petroff* (GEORGE SANDERS), *who discovers her on a petting party with Count Volsky* (EDWARD EVERETT HORTON).

Olivier's "Henry V." is ablaze with passion for Shakespeare, and it would seem hard for any receptive person to watch the film without catching some spark from that flame.

The film runs for two hours and a half, and retains about two-thirds of the original text. The only interpolations are a borrowed speech from "King Henry IV., Part II.," which is used to explain the various textual references to Falstaff, and a couple of lines from Marlowe's "Tamburlaine," given to Pistol when he goes off to the wars. The play is presented as a play within a play. The opening scenes show the first performance of "Henry V." on the stage of the old Globe Theatre, and are played broadly for comedy—a device of illustrating "this wooden O" which I thought excellent in conception, but in performance rather tedious and trite.

With the gathering of the fleet at Southampton, however, the film breaks loose, the backgrounds broaden, the action is full of a wide bustle, and the playing changes from stylised buffoonery into a drama in which the poetry has taken possession. From that moment onwards the film is glorious. The producers have gone to the mediæval Italian painters for their battlescapes, and to Holbein and Brueghel for their colours. For the superb charge of the cavalry at Agincourt, they have relied on the tempo of a musician. Before a foot of the scene was shot, William Walton worked out a short score, which was used as a guide track for timing. The result is a classical screen sequence, music and movement gathering impetus together.

It takes strong acting to match this splendour of production, and "Henry V." has it. Leslie Banks' Chorus flings open the door to romance with a flourish. Robert Newton plays the Ancient Pistol with a huge Shakespearean gusto. The scenes in the French camp, always a little dull in reading, are quickened by three fine performances, from Leo Genn as the Constable, Max Adrian as the Dauphin, and Ralph Truman as a herald with a warm heart not wholly hidden by the formal pink of chivalry. Renée Asherson plays Katharine with a demure coquetry and a kind of school-girl secrecy that is altogether charming, and makes the final scene of the wooing one of the most delightful in the picture.

Laurence Olivier's own Henry is a development of the performance he gave at the Old Vic, adapted very cunningly to the enlargement of the scene beyond the four walls of a theatre. As the central figure of a huge crowd in a vast champaign, he strikes a high heroic note and uses his voice to the

THE BEST PLAYS.

* * * "BLITHE SPIRIT" *(Duchess)*. Noel Coward's play. Penelope Ward, Joyce Carey, Nicholas Phipps.

* * * "UNCLE HARRY" *(Garrick)*. Murder thriller, with Michael Redgrave and Beatrix Lehmann.

* * OLD VIC THEATRE COMPANY *(New)*. Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, Sybil Thorndike, Nicholas Hannen in repertory.

* * "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" *(Strand)*. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Edmund Willard.

* * "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" *(Globe)*. Farce. Jane Baxter, Hugh Wakefield.

* * "SWEETER AND LOWER" *(Ambassadors)*. Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

* * "TO-MORROW THE WORLD" *(Aldwych)*. Nazi youth. Robert Harris, Elizabeth Allan, Jean Cadell, David O'Brien.

* * SADLER'S WELLS OPERA SEASON *(Princes)*.

* * JOHN GIELGUD in Repertory *(Haymarket)*. Yvonne Arnaud, Peggy Ashcroft, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* * "QUIET WEEK-END" *(Playhouse)*. Esther McCracken's comedy. Frank Cellier, Marjorie Fielding, George Thorpe.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, Consult your daily paper; ring up

Volsky gives a wedding party for Olga and Urbenin. Nadina, now Petroff's fiancée, finds him kissing the bride, leaves the house and breaks the engagement. Overcome with horror at spoiling three lives, Petroff kills Olga. Urbenin, with blood on his sleeve, is suspected, and sent to Siberia.

His unconfessed murder eats into Petroff's soul. He feels he must write the story, which, submitted to Nadina, now editor, is posted back to its author. Petroff falls in a fight with the postman to recover his MS., and dies in the arms of Nadina (ANNA LEE).

full leather of his lungs. "Once more into the breach, dear friends," is a war-cry; the Crispin's Day speech ends on something that is almost a brazen scream. But that is only half the portrait. Mr. Olivier has another sort of King for another sort of occasion; a man of quiet breeding, full of gentle courtesies; a wakeful man alone with his thoughts in the darkness; a lover who doesn't know how to woo, but can't help winning. Above all, he suggests a Henry who is at all times a leader; the sort of man honest men will follow till they drop.

After "Henry V.", Hollywood's little flutter with the classics in "SUMMER STORM" (Pavilion) seems a modest affair, but it is a flutter with the classics, nevertheless, and as such to be commended. The film is taken from a short story by Tchehov, called "The Shooting Party." Divested of the flash-backs and peeps into the past without which, it seems, no drama of passion can decently be made to-day, it runs roughly as follows. Olga (Linda Darnell), a shapely and not unco-operative woodcutter's daughter, is driven into a Russian garden-house for shelter, by the sort of weather mentioned in the title. There she is discovered by a lecherous Count (Edward Everett Horton), and his friend (George Sanders), a no less lecherous but more personable Judge. What with the girl's dark beauty, and the sultry weather, and the prevalent morals of that particular Czarist régime, the encounter proves too much for this precious couple. They fall for Olga like a ton of bricks.

Nobody knows better than Olga what to do with a nobleman's lust. In spite of her marriage with the Count's peasant foreman (a part beautifully played by Hugo Haas), she hasn't by any means finished with the Count and the Judge. She is far too practical to finish with anyone who still has wealth or position to give her. First she ruins the Judge's attempt to marry and settle down with a Really Nice Girl (Anna Lee). Then she turns her attentions to the Count, blithely deceiving both her husband and her lover. This, as it happens, is Olga's big miscalculation. At the Count's shooting-party she is found mysteriously stabbed. Her husband is accused of killing her and sent to the salt-mines in Siberia. The Judge, who is largely responsible for the sentence, and solely responsible for the killing, begins to be tormented by his conscience. This is the real point of the Tchehov story. Who suffers most, the innocent man working out his sentence in Siberia, or the guilty man battling with his conscience at home?

Starred by "The Sketch." ***=*top-score.*

* * "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" *(Palace).* Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

* * "HAPPY AND GLORIOUS" *(Palladium).* Revue with Tommy Trinder, Zoë Gail, Elisabeth Welch.

* * "SCANDAL AT BARCHESTER" *(Wyndham's).* Trollope with Felix Aylmer, Milton Rosmer, Olga Lindo, Dorothy Hyson.

* * "PRIVATE LIVES" *(Apollo).* Noel Coward revival, with Kay Hammond, John Clements.

* "MEET ME VICTORIA" *(Victoria Palace).* Cockney humour with Lupino Lane, Dorothy Ward.

* "NO MEDALS" *(Vaudeville).* Wartime housewife. Fay Compton.

* "THE MAGISTRATE" *(St. Martin's)* Pinero's Victorian comedy revived. Denys Blakelock, Avice Landone, Derek Blomfield.

* "IT DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN" *(Westminster).* Bridie's latest. Alastair Sim, Angela Baddeley.

* "THREE'S A FAMILY" *(Saville).* Comedy. With Vera Pearce.

* "IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" *(Duke of York's).* Ralph Lynn, Enid Stamp Taylor.

* "THIS WAS A WOMAN" *(Comedy).* Sonia Dresdel in melodrama.

* "THE LAST OF MRS. CHEYNEY" *(Savoy).* Jack Buchanan, Coral Browne, Athene Seyler.

e cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur.
the theatre to avoid disappointment.

"The Merry Monahans" (Leicester Square Theatre) is the story of a song-and-dance team and the lives of its members, with Donald O'Connor, Jack Oakie, Peggy Ryan and Ann Blyth starring. Here Jimmy (O'CONNOR), *mistaken for a hobo, has been given a banknote, about which Pete* (JACK OAKIE) *and Patsy* (PEGGY RYAN) *make searching inquiries.*

The ugly, sultry mood of the Tchehov period piece could probably have been better caught in a Continental studio—best of all, perhaps, in Paris, where they understand how to produce these effects to a nicety. (Imagine it directed by Jean Renoir, with Jean Gabin and Louis Jouvet as the magistrate and the nobleman. Who should we have for our Olga? Viviane Romance?) But within its American style and idiom, and with the exception of a couple of cases of unfortunate casting, "Summer Storm" really does very nicely. It has kept remarkably close to Tchehov, with little attempt to improve on a natural screen scenario. And, unmistakably, it has atmosphere. The style is simple, very simple, but there are moments when this simple seeming masks a cunning use of natural things—storm, landscape, seasons—to build up and sustain an emotional mood.

I don't quite know on what grounds "LAURA" (Empire) is described as a "psychological" thriller. Some such claim, I seem to remember, was also advanced for the book, a thoroughly good murder story by Vera Caspary. Both the film and the story seem to me excellent, but reasonably straightforward, examples of the whodunnit, with perhaps a rather more observant study of character than is usual in such works.

A detective (Dana Andrews) is sent to investigate the murder of Laura Hunt, a beautiful young advertising artist, in her New York apartment. He falls so deeply in love with Laura's portrait, and the taste exhibited in her personal belongings, that it is a special relief to him when one night the front door opens and in walks the live Laura (Gene Tierney), fresh from a week-end in the country. Still, *somebody* has been murdered, and even though it turns out to have been only a model for face-cream or something, her death has to be investigated. The three leading suspects are Laura herself, the big, fashionable lounger (Vincent Price) she is engaged to marry, and the prissy, effeminate critic-connoisseur (Clifton Webb), who has built up Laura's business career.

Who done it? You'll probably guess long before the end, but even so, the picture won't fail to hold you. "Laura" has been made with more care than most murder stories. The production has gloss and finish; the characters have individuality; some of the lines, particularly Mr. Webb's, have a fine cutting edge. The whole of Mr. Webb's performance is a joy. His waspish, precise, mean, nasty little connoisseur, with a possessive passion for beauty, is acting of the sort we rarely get in the cinema.

"CASANOVA BROWN" (Odeon) is about a young man who thinks his marriage has been annulled the day after the wedding, and who is snatched away from another wedding nine months later to adopt and nurture the fruit of the first one. It is a very clever film. It is a very clever film because it is going to make a very great deal of money. It has Gary Cooper in it, *and* a baby. What could be safer at the box-office? Tender hearts everywhere are going to quicken at the sight of this big, lonely gawk, Casanova, struggling with the niceties of nursery diet and hygiene.

Columbia's "He Snoops to Conquer" (Tivoli) is directed by Marcel Varnell. GEORGE FORMBY, *as odd-job-man George of Tangleton Town Hall, gives away to the Press the story of the town's lack of housing plans. Sir Timothy Strawbridge* (ROBERTSON HARE), *mad inventor, thinks George should run as Town Councillor.*

The election campaign is a whirlwind affair with lots of rhythm. George gets in through Sir Timothy's new invention, which blazons forth in no uncertain tones the misdemeanours of his opponent. He wins not only a seat on the Town Council, but Miss Jane Strawbridge (ELIZABETH ALLAN) *as well.*

Leaving a hospital, the Supreme Commander signed his autograph for the nurses.

General Mud forced General Eisenhower into fleece-lined boots.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

GENERAL "IKE" EISENHOWER,

for wearing his nickname on his boots instead of his heart on his sleeve.

The BOOTS.

WHEN GENERAL "IKE" EISENHOWER paid a visit to British forces on the Western Front recently he wore a pair of splendid fleece-lined flying boots stamped large with his nickname. But even without this visible sign of identity that genial smile is a hall-mark just as well known to the British soldier as to his doughboy comrade in the field.

Left: He chatted to Lieut. J. A. H. Wilkinson, of Montreal.

And (right) to another British soldier.

BEAUTY ATTENTIVE TO THE VOICE OF MARS.

Fortunate PRIVATE FARNSWORTH, *sole guest to be entertained by* GINGER ROGERS *and seven other beautiful film-stars, had the whale of a time—and so did his hostesses. One of the best moments for all was when the guest of honour described a "fox-hole adventure" which he came through in the Pacific. The girls listened as he told the story: "There we were, Japs closing in . . . bullets over our heads. I took up my gun . . ."*

PHOTOGRAPH BY RALPH CRANE, B.S.

HOW GINGER MADE A G.I.'s DREAM COME TRUE!

"If I'm dreaming, go away and lemme sleep": PRIVATE FARNSWORTH *danced with* CHILI WILLIAMS.

He didn't struggle much when the girls gan

The conquering hero, straight from the wars, relaxed for a while on a sofa and listened to the girls softly singing.

On the terrace they played a game at which the guest could not p

***N.B.* A Coloured pl**

WHATEVER E.N.S.A., C.E.M.A., Army Welfare, or adoring friends and relations can do for a hero, they can hardly hope to arrange a party such as PRIVATE JOHN FARNSWORTH attended the other day! He has had three years' active service in the Pacific and is at home recovering from malaria. Ginger Rogers had the idea that she'd like to make a soldier's dream come true, so she asked him to a one-man party at which she, Lynne Baggett, Lynn Bari, Barbara Hale, Gloria DeHaven, Jinx Falkenburg, Dolores Moran, and Chili Williams

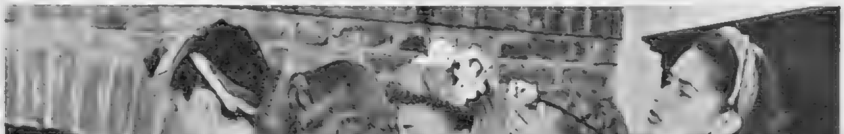
[*Continued opposite.*

THE HAPPY WARRIOR AT A ONE-MAN PARTY.

nd heaved him into the swimming-pool!

In the soda bar of Ginger's Beverly Hills house, the girls vied with each other for the chance to make him a sundae.

se—Blind Man's Buff, with each hostess anxious to be caught!



And here's a queue of beauty lined up to get a chance of toasting marshmallows for their G.I. guest, on the grill in the playroom.

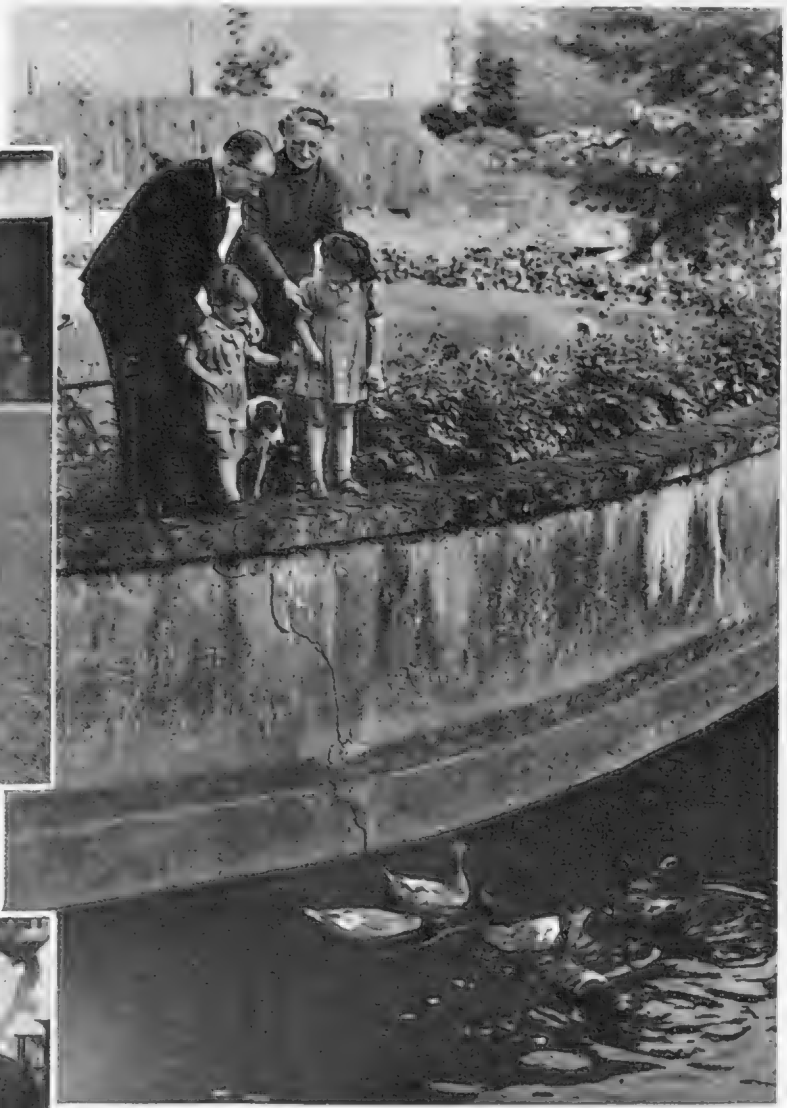
Continued.]
were the hostesses. At first the dazzle effect of meeting Ginger and the seven other lovelies she had collected made him blush and sweat a bit, but when they listened to him, admired him, danced with him, played games with him and fed him, he got over his initial shyness and the party went with a swing, as these *Life* photographs show. Hostesses and guest couldn't have enjoyed anything more, and no wonder, for it's a dream party that just won't ever happen again! The Elysian Fields weren't in it.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RALPH CRANE, B.S.

serted in this issue.

HOME GUARD GUN-INVENTOR AT HOME—MAJOR SMITH.

In the garden of their attractive Hampton Court home, MAJOR W. H. SMITH *and* MRS. SMITH *enjoy a little autumn sunshine. Here he has carried out many of his experiments.*



With their grandchildren, JIMMY *and* PATRICIA BOSWELL, *Major and Mrs. Smith feed the ducks in the river, which borders their garden.*

Here are the inventor and his wife with their daughter, MRS. BOSWELL, *and her two children.*

MAJOR W. H. SMITH invented the Smith gun, one of the most valuable pieces of equipment served out to that valuable defence force, the Home Guard, which has now held its last parade. Early in 1940 Major W. H. Smith was convinced our infantry had no appropriate weapon to stand up to the enemy's armoured fighting vehicles and light tanks, and thought they should be equipped with something heavier than rifles and machine-guns. The Stokes gun was not available, so he set himself to make a gun on similarly simple lines. After four or five weeks' experiment the Smith gun was born. Firing at high or low elevations, it can swing round to the maximum bearing of 360 degrees. Apart from the increasingly threatening position in France, at that time the inventor foresaw the possibility of the invasion of this country, a risk which became very real and perilous within a few weeks. Five different models of the Smith gun were produced, leading up to the model now familiar to the Services, and particularly to the Home Guard. The gun was eventually seen by the Premier, whereupon his usual energy was exerted to see that it reached the right hands as quickly as possible.

In his garden MAJOR SMITH *has a laboratory, where many of his experiments have been carried out. He is seen at work at his lathe.*

American enthusiasm for film-stars knows no bounds. In Hollywood the public will wait for long hours in order to get a glimpse of their favourite screen actors and actresses arriving for any important film première. This is what the sidewalk and temporary stand outside the Carthay Circle Theatre looked like in the early afternoon before the first presentation of 20th Century-Fox's "Wilson."

The laying of the special red carpet along the arcade of the Carthay Circle Theatre, Hollywood, is a ritual which precedes any important film première. Some five thousand "fans" had seats on specially constructed stands outside the building; while many others stood for hours on the sidewalk just to get a momentary view of the famous film personalities as they arrived to see the first presentation of "Wilson." The British première of the film is fixed for January 4 at the Odeon, Leicester Square.

U.S. FILM-STAR WORSHIP: THOUSANDS WAIT FOR A PASSING GLIMPSE.

A very unusual collection of "pin-up" girls : Miss M. T. Watts, one of the teachers, demonstrates DESIGN FOR CHILDREN'S CLOTHES.

Busy with some PRACTICAL METAL WORK : *Two young students of the Junior Art Department.*

OVER a hundred years ago a School of Design for manufactures was founded in Nottingham. It has now become the Nottingham College of Arts and Crafts, made up of six closely related schools for the study of art as applied to industry in every form. It is considered to be one of the best and most enterprising of British art colleges, and the principal, Mr. Alfred H. Rodway, his staff, and their students are all determined that in the brave new planned world which we are promised, nothing ugly shall be made or used, and that good design for everyday objects shall be universal. Architecture, Modelling, Sculpture and Design as applied to Fashion, Cabinet-making, Machine Embroidery,

[*Continued opposite.*

Outside work is taken on by advanced students : This lad is finishing LETTERING FOR USE IN A WINDOW DISPLAY.

These two art students, Miss Joan Brown and Miss Mary Hayes, are DESIGNING POSTERS *in connection with the "Holidays at Home" week.*

PEOPLE WHO MEAN TO SEE THAT NOTHING UGLY IS MADE

The fascinating subject of MODEL-MAKING : *A young student receiving instruction in decorative expression.*

The school of drawing, painting and illustration has a large number of students : SENIORS IN THE LIFE CLASS.

STUDYING FINE EXAMPLES OF LACE : *All students in training for this branch will enter the trade as designers, draughtsmen, and so forth.*

Manipulating HANDLOOMS *for the production of beautiful fabrics : Students busy in the weaving class.*

Continued.]
Textiles (woven and printed), Jewellery and Pottery, etc., are among the subjects studied. Naturally the Lace industry, so closely connected with Nottingham, provides an important section for students, and designers in all branches of Nottingham lace-making are specially trained. Our photographs show some of the students at work in different sections of the college.

MR. L. C. COLLIER, *Deputy Principal of the College, is explaining the intricacies of the Levers' Lace Machine to a student.*

STUDENTS AT NOTTINGHAM'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS.

BROADWAY VENUS BY THE SEA-SIDE.

MARY MARTIN, *star of the Broadway musical success "One Touch of Venus," was a dancer before she made her name as a singer. She's also an outdoor girl, and spends as much time as she can, between her successful stage appearances, by the sea-side. Our photographs show her about to dive, and playing a big fish with expert confidence.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY VANDAMM STUDIOS.

INTRODUCING
"SINCE YOU WENT AWAY."

CLAUDETTE COLBERT *modelled for the poster to which* JOSEPH COTTEN *is pointing in a scene from " Since You Went Away," David O. Selznick's first film for four years. Based on the letters of Margaret Buell Wilder to her husband on service, Selznick wrote it usually only one scene ahead of the camera, did some directing, edited it down to three-hour length. This big, rambling story of American home-front life examines cocktail lounges, crowded trains, food shortages, the sorrows of loss and comforts of religion from the ordinary American point of view, and is acted by the most extravagant accumulation of star-talent since " G.W.T.W." With over 200 speaking parts, it provides ample range for the abilities of Claudette Colbert, Jennifer Jones, Shirley Temple, Joseph Cotten, Monty Woolley, Robert Walker, Nazimova and Hattie McDaniel. Lionel Barrymore has a three-minute part too. " Since You Went Away " is due in London early in January.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"THE Golden Carpet" is a reprint, with modifications, of two narratives of desert warfare already published in limited editions at a price prohibitive to the general reader. The new volume is cheap at fifteen shillings; with its beautiful paper, plentiful illustrations and excellent print, it is a shining example of wartime book production.

Of the contents it is possible to take two views—perhaps more than two—and which they are depends on how the reader likes a war record to be written. Captain Somerset de Chair was Intelligence Officer to the column which crossed the Iraq Desert in May 1941 and captured Baghdad. In June, it returned on its tracks and fought an action at Palmyra in which the author was severely wounded. The first expedition saved Iraq from falling under German control; and the second, in which our enemies were mostly the French forces of the Vichy Government, was almost equally vital to Syria. The number of men in "Kingcol"—as the column was named, after its Commanding Officer, Brigadier Kingstone—was small, or small compared with the results it obtained.

A Puckish Spirit. Besides being the column's Intelligence Officer, Captain de Chair was, if not exactly its *enfant terrible*, at any rate a puckish spirit who enjoyed the lighter side of military life; and the reader who likes accounts of warfare to be dignified and couched in the bare language of official understatement may be irritated with "The Golden Carpet"; for the author makes no secret of the pleasure he took in the humours and absurdities of the expedition or of his efforts to make himself as comfortable as he could. The "last caresses of civilisation" meant a great deal to him, and when his shaving-water was hot, or the opportunity for a bath occurred, he does not hesitate to mention it. Though anxious to give credit where credit is due, he takes neither himself nor anyone else very seriously. He pokes fun all round. Glubb Pasha, organiser of the Bedouin Desert Patrol, contributes a commentary on Captain de Chair's narrative which is printed at the end of the book. In it Major Glubb takes the writer to task for having done scant justice to the men of the Arab Legion.

I do not think you have realised to what extent, during the six weeks before Baghdad fell, the whole Arab world seemed to be solidly against us. It is difficult to exaggerate the courage and loyalty of these men of the Arab Legion. . . .

LADY ASTOR, M.P. *blew out the twenty-five candles on her Silver Jubilee cake at a reception given for her at Dorland House by the Women's Electrical Association. The first woman to enter Parliament, she is M.P. for the Sutton Division of Plymouth, but has now decided that she will not stand again.*

Some may grumble at the author's levity and innocent absorption in his own concerns; but others—and those probably the majority—will be glad that he has resisted the common temptation to write too much in the grand manner about the Middle East. In any case, his levity is never callous. His solicitude for the wounded gazelle shows him to be a man of feeling, and if his dislike of physical discomfort occasionally makes him seem an egoist, his disregard of danger proves him to be something of a hero. From the historian's point of view, his record has the defect that it does not sufficiently distinguish what is militarily important from what is not; it flows on with the unselectiveness of an interior monologue. The crises of the campaign have come and gone almost before we recognise them as such. In histories, things do not happen so casually, but they do in life, and "The Golden Carpet" will be remembered among war books not so much as a military record as for the irrepressible fount of human nature that bubbles up in it.

"Portmanteau" Novels. "North from Bombay" is a novel of the portmanteau type—that is to say, the juxtaposition of the characters is due to chance. This is true in some measure of every novel, but the traditional idea was to give the effect of an organism growing; whereas in "Grand Hotel" and the fiction deriving from it all the mechanical problems of bringing the characters into touch were solved at one go. It is an artificial convention, made still more artificial by the fact that the action is usually compressed into a brief space—often of only twenty-four hours. To be successful, such a novel has to be a *tour de force*, with the defects and merits of that genre. The gain in intensity is balanced by a loss of naturalness, the triumphant exercise of ingenuity by the weakness of having no central theme. The characters being all free and equal, and all massed in the foreground, the reader's attention is divided and sometimes bewildered.

Mrs. Gillespie's portmanteau is an express train travelling north from Bombay. We know its destination, or one of its destinations, for we have already had a glimpse of Brigadier Mortimer lying ill at Dierra, awaiting the wife who, after years of partial estrangement, is coming out to him from England. Other passengers on the train have interests in Dierra, and for most of them life has reached a kind of crisis. Thrown together in the close quarters that travelling involves, they become confidential and, as the story of each is revealed, we find that some of them are bound together by ties they never knew existed. . . . Then, with startling suddenness, comes the catastrophe which provides the way out for at least one warped and hopeless life.

Deus ex Machina. The interfering deity is a veritable *deus ex machina*, and as such may be resented. It plays too openly into the author's hands, but it also throws a light—a rather lurid light—on contemporary political conditions in India. Mrs. Gillespie is alive to all the issues of her story, national as well as personal; and this sense of general responsibility makes "North from Bombay" more subdued in tone than some of her books have been. She holds in her hands the fates of so many people, nearly all of them to be pitied in one way or another. Where all are suffering, the plight of individuals seems of lesser moment; and my criticism of this interesting, sensitive and well-written book would be that it has more restraint than its already rather muted emotional tone warrants.

A Novel of the Mendips. "Priddy Barrows" might be called a novel of the Mendips, for the story is as intimately connected with its setting as "The Return of the Native" or "Wuthering Heights." The barrows serve Mr. Jarmain as a symbol—a symbol perhaps (for he never quite defines it) of acceptance and permanence and peace. Threatened with destruction by the restless possessiveness of Nelson Hayes, to whose project of making a golf-course they were an obstacle, the barrows survive all the turmoil of the story. But they are not the only symbols. Girt House, Nelson Hayes' school for delicate and backward boys, is one microcosm in which we find, warped, mutilated and undeveloped, a number of human traits; and the parishioners of Priddy, presided over by their gaunt, devoted Rector, make another. Rich and poor alike, they regarded Girt House, gloomy among its fir-trees, with superstitious dread and gave it a wide berth, and here, if we will, we may discern yet another symbol.

Into this murky but inflammable district comes Gerald Trested, exchanging his bookshop in London for the position of schoolmaster at Girt House. He is a man who knows his way about and is not easily daunted or bewildered. Friendly by nature, he is soon initiated into the complex politics of local social life; even Nelson Hayes, brusque and intimidating, has no terrors for him. Susceptible, he twice falls in love. His is the chief part, but he does not quite dominate the stage; the others have their independent existences and are not merely seen through his eyes. Indeed, the essential loneliness of human beings is one of the chief themes of the book—perhaps the chief, although Nelson Hayes' lust of possession apparently overshadows it. Mr. Jarmain's analysis of character is subtle and original, for it goes below the level of ordinary consciousness, and concerns itself with instinct no less than with will; his people, though for the most part unusually aware and mature (especially when in love), also move like sleep-walkers. Mr. Jarmain relates them to something more important and lasting than their own lives, and this gives them a universal quality and the final catastrophe an air of inevitability. I think there are rather too many characters and not all of them are equally well made out. Alice Ingle is particularly difficult to believe in.

We learn that Mr. Jarmain has been killed in the war. This is a sad loss to fiction, for "Priddy Barrows" is a first novel of great distinction and originality.

All Mankind's Epitome. When Richard Winter was found dead in a bath, the evidence as to how he met his end was sparse and equivocal. Only Detective-Sergeant Warren, disturbed by one inexplicable point, was convinced of foul play, and was ready to back his conviction with £5 and his professional reputation. He sought the clues that would vindicate his theory rather in the personality of the dead actor than among the circumstances of his death. From first to last, it was the character of Richard Winter that intrigued him, and indeed a man so various tested the detective's every power of discovery and deduction. "How many men can one man be?" enquires the journalist, and the end is at hand before the "final wrapping of tinfoil" is peeled off and the complex personality seen in its true relation to the other characters. This is Mr. James Warren's main theme in "She Fell Among Actors," and it is more interesting than the actual circumstances of the killing.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

The Golden Carpet. By Somerset de Chair. (*Faber and Faber; 15s.*)
North from Bombay. By Susan Gillespie. (*Geoffrey Bles; 8s. 6d.*)
Priddy Barrows. By John Jarmain. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)
She Fell Among Actors. By James Warren. (*Collins; 7s. 6d.*)

Pin-up Girl: No. 15. Beth Dean.

BETH DEAN, *brilliant young U.S. dancer, is said to have arrived, and to be America's outstanding première ballerina. She was educated in Europe, and that is all we know about her at the moment, except that her photogenic quality is really undeniable, and that, poised* sur la pointe *she makes an admirable pin-up girl; in fact, she is Just the Thing, as " The Young Visiter " would put it.*

WHY HE DIED.*

By SIDNEY DENHAM.

THE young house-surgeon kneeled beside the prone figure on the stretcher. "They said there was no chance for him," the stretcher-bearer said. The young doctor nodded mechanically.

"Don't get many splinters with these damned things," the stretcher-bearer went on, "but one of 'em caught him in the back."

The doctor nodded again without interrupting his examination. "Lungs perforated," he said. "It 's a matter of minutes."

"Well, I 'd better get back." The stretcher-bearer went reluctantly. He knew the man on the stretcher. Jack Smith had run the Bunch of Grapes for more years than he liked to think. One of the best. Stopped the youngsters taking too much. Always a cheery word and one on the house for the man that needed it. And he had a missus and three youngsters. Why the hell did it have to be Jack?

. . . .

The doctor stayed by the dying man, waving away a nurse who came up, with a shrug of his shoulders. There was nothing he could do; but something about the full face, which even now seemed to be half-smiling under the dirt, fascinated him. He looked idly at the cheap chromium identity disc hanging from a chain on the wrist, where he could no longer distinguish a pulse. CLMXK/314/1 he read. He wondered what the man's name was.

The man's lips moved. They seemed to be forming words. The doctor leaned closer. The man was still unconscious. But he muttered: "Why did it have to be me?" It was the barest whisper, but the tone of angry surprise and protest was unmistakable.

Why did it have to be CLMXK/314/1? The surgeon wondered. Why not CLMXK/315/1 or CLMXY/316/1? Why was this man picked out of all London's eight millions to receive that piece of flying steel? Chance? That answer did not satisfy his scientifically-trained mind.

Why should it be CLMXK/314/1? He tried to focus his thoughts. The man on the stretcher gave a convulsive shudder. The surgeon knew what it meant. The dusty face suddenly relaxed.

. . . .

An old soldier would have said that CLMXK/314/1 died because the robot had his number on it. But the number on the robot was not CLMXK/314/1. They found the number on a piece of the explosion-contorted steel body. It was DMA—731—3—44. An intelligence officer noted the number, looking impressive. He admitted that the marking told them a lot about the story of the bomb up to the moment of launching. . . .

But it did not tell them the things that mattered—at any rate, to the man who had been handing a brimming pint pot to a customer when a piece of steel entered his lungs.

It told them that the body of the robot was made at the Deutsche Motoren Aktiengesellschaft in March 1944. That was near Leipzig. But it did not tell them that Henri Lebrun gave only reluctant attention to his machine, because he had that morning heard that his son had taken to the hills rather than face conscription for similar work, and was probably with the Maquis. That would mean Lucille was alone. And she would be questioned, if not taken as a hostage. It was enough to make a man careless. Well, he could only hope the inspector would not notice that roughness of the seam on the strange torpedo-shaped piece of sheet-steel. They said it was for some new mine-sweeping device. . . . .

The inspector did notice the roughness. The inspector was a woman. Her eyes were red-rimmed. Not because of air-raid broken sleep, like so many. But because she had been weeping. She had broken at last. When the cold impersonal form had told her that her husband would not return, because he had made the supreme sacrifice for his country and his Führer, she had broken and wept. She had not wept when her father made the sacrifice. Nor yet when her brother had not returned from the East. Hans would not have approved of her weeping. But now Hans would not know, and she had wept silently and secretly all night. . . .

She tried to force her attention on to the piece of steel in front of her. That roughness would not do. It would have to go back. She picked up her chalk, and then stopped. The rejection of the piece would mean trouble for someone. There had been too high a proportion of spoilt work recently. Notices threatened dire penalties if there were more. It would be treated as sabotage. . . . They might even shoot a man as an example. Was there not enough shooting without her adding to it?

She made the mark that passed the long torpedo-shaped piece of steel, engraved DMA—731—3—44, as meeting requirements. Somehow it gave her comfort. As if she had saved a life.

The chief meteorologist lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair. He blew out smoke and looked at his assistants disdainfully. "You estimate the wind over Kent to be 9·8 miles an hour?" he asked.

They nodded respectfully. The meteorologist turned to the liaison officer. "They have not the advantage of personal acquaintance with the English climate," he exclaimed. "I reluctantly spent twelve months there—in 1918, recovering from a wound. I did not recover. The English wind would keep any wound open!"

The liaison officer laughed. The assistants smiled respectfully. The meteorologist felt better. He knew the liaison officer. He would repeat the witty statement of the meteorologist in his mess. The General would inquire the name of the officer who had made this joke. The General liked to have men about him who could make him laugh. With luck this happy inspiration would lead to that staff appointment. And now, more than ever, he wanted a staff appointment. The air-raid shelters at headquarters were better. Besides, the R.A.F. had not yet discovered the headquarters, whereas they no sooner seemed to have established one of these launching-platforms than the machines were over. . . .

"The wind over Kent is 11·8 m.p.h.," he said with finality, writing on the form in front of him. "It is always wise to add two miles an hour to the wind speed over that God-forsaken country. . . ." The liaison officer went to the telephone. A mile away an engineer made an adjustment to the controls of flying bomb DMA—731—3—44 to compensate for a wind blowing from S.S.-W. at 11·8 m.p.h.

. . . .

At the launching-platform Ober Gefreiter Kurt Werner repeated the orders given to him mechanically. "Twenty degrees three minutes twenty seconds—elevation 39——" He could hear the sound of aircraft approaching and glanced momentarily over his shoulder to measure once again the distance to the underground shelter entrance. No need to ask whether the 'planes were ours or theirs. They were always theirs now.

In the fraction of a second for which he glanced his fingers slipped on the controls. They were at twenty degrees three minutes and forty seconds. . . . The Hauptmann shouted at him. The sound of the 'planes was unpleasantly close. In these trees they could see nothing. . . . He stepped away. A moment later there was a roar as the robot took the air.

The Hauptmann noted the firing of DMA—731—3—44. "I hope it gets Churchill," he exclaimed. He had made the same remark with every robot they had launched. But Kurt still gave the expected answer. "It will not be our fault if it does not. Everything was correct."

. . . .

The effect of that rough seam began to be felt by the robot before it reached the Channel. The wind toyed with the protruding bits of metal and curled round. Imperceptibly the robot changed its course. As it reached the hills of Kent the wind dropped to less than 10 miles an hour. It chugged on, oblivious of the innumerable bursting shells. And so, a quarter of an hour later, it appeared over London.

But it was not heading for Downing Street. The error which made it deviate a yard as it left France had grown into one that was half-a-mile. If Kurt had not been distracted, it would have hit Fleet Street. But his carelessness had pointed the robot farther east. The wind had brought it back a trifle. Just enough to send it directly towards the Bunch of Grapes, where only a few nervous customers took shelter when they heard the alert. The engine cut out, and it fell directly on the bar. Inside the bomb, 2000 lb. of explosive gases expanding in a ten-thousandth of a second found the weak spots of the steel restraining them, breaking it into fragments.

The crystallisation of that piece of steel when it was annealed determined the shape of the many-sided fragment. The shape of the fragment determined its course through the air as it was propelled at 6000 ft. a second, and it rotated rapidly until it struck between the shoulders of Jack Smith, just dropping instinctively as he saw the flash. . . . If the temperature of the furnace had been one degree less or more, the steel would have fractured differently and the fragment would have embedded itself in the bar.

. . . .

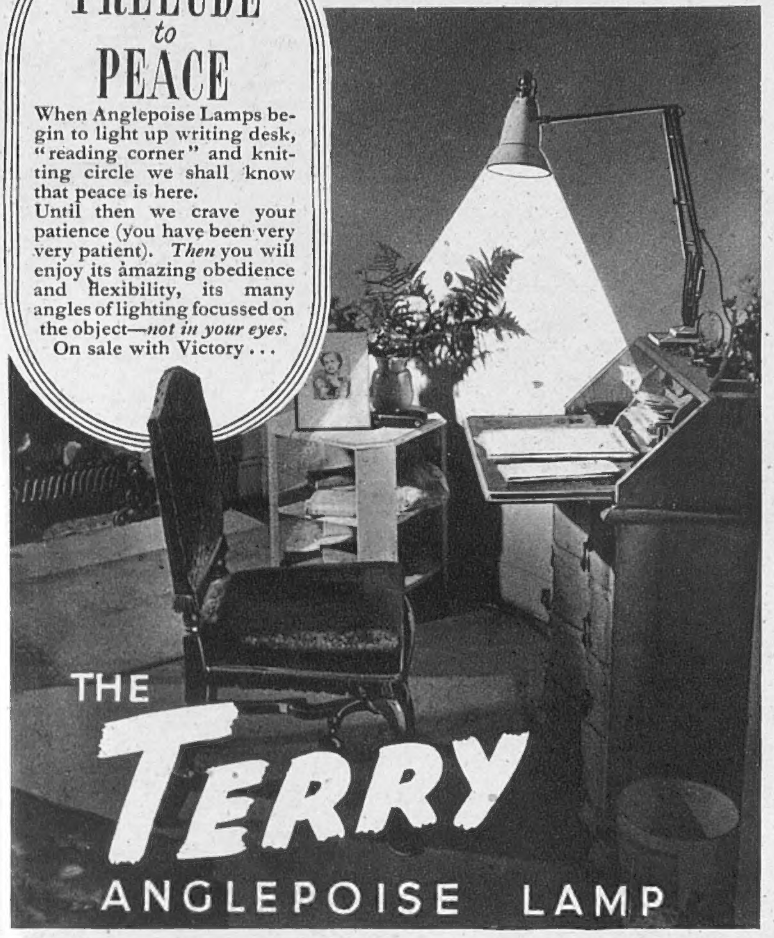
The worry of Henri Lebrun, the grief of the inspector, the deliberate miscalculation of the meteorologist, the fear of Kurt Werner: those are but four of a million reasons why robot DMA—731—3—44 killed Jack Smith CLMXK/314/1, and not Winston Churchill or any other of the 8,000,000 people in London. Jack Smith died because the compounds of nitrogen and hydrogen are instable, because bodies move in accordance with laws described by Newton; because 6000 miles away a glacier breaking into the Atlantic gave birth to an iceberg, that presently cooled the air and reduced the speed of the wind over England by a few yards an hour. . . .

The sum of human knowledge could give you a million reasons contributing to the death of Jack Smith, but they would not be half the reasons. The death of Jack Smith was prepared before he was born, at the moment when the first atom in the universe condensed, and the effect of his death will continue until the last atom is annihilated. It was an event to which all events have contributed and which contributes to all events.

All this the young doctor saw in one flash of intuition, in the fraction of a second it took him to rise to his feet. The glimpse of infinity and immortality was so fleeting that he was hardly conscious of it. But he walked away feeling curiously comforted for some reason he did not understand.

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*



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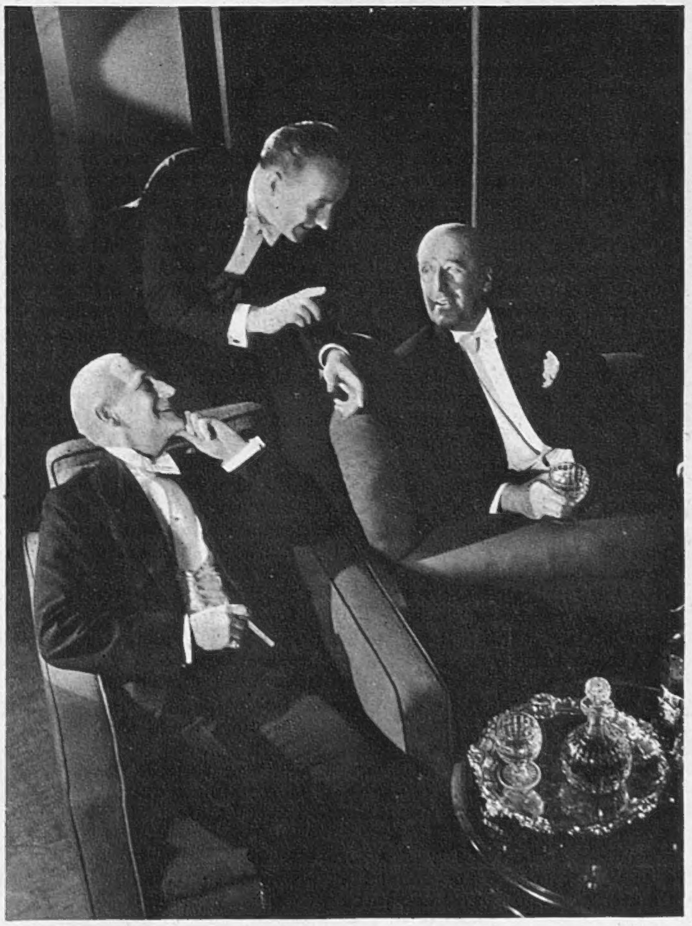

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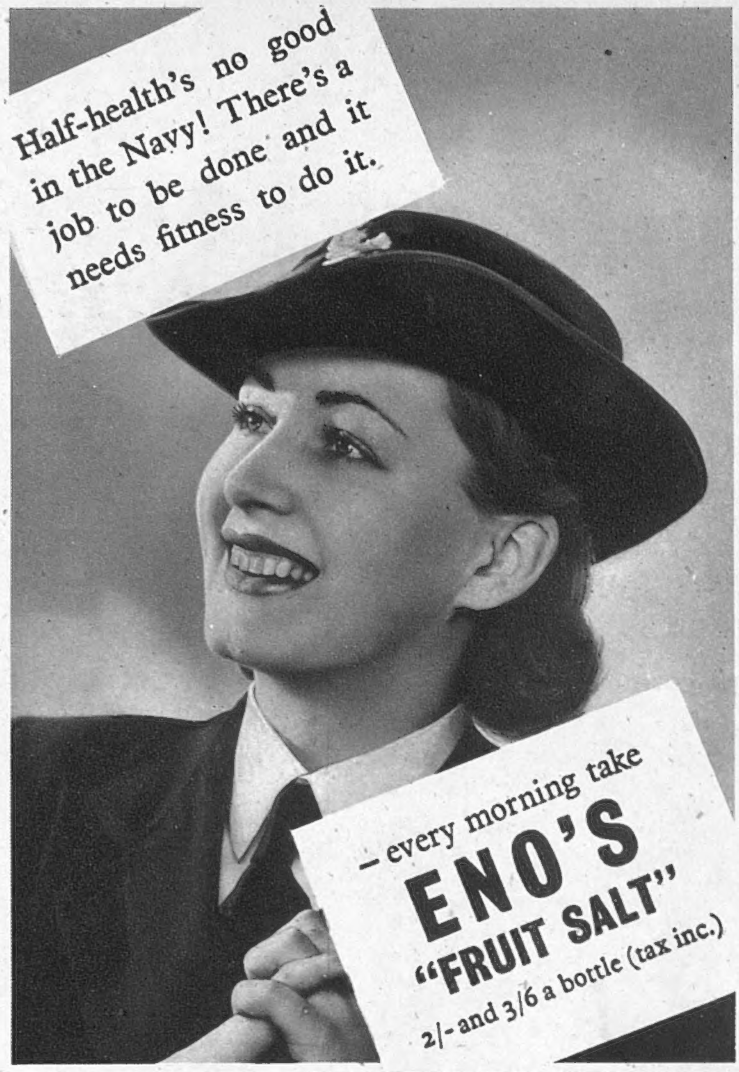

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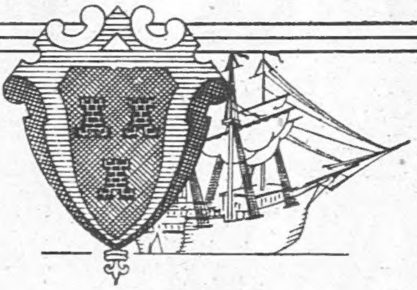

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